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THE USE OF A SCORE CARD IN MEASURING HANDWRITING

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In the measurement of any product of school work which can be analyzed into component parts, more satisfactory results are generally secured, if the person who makes the measurements considers the separate elements as units, instead of regarding the product only as a complex. In the measurement of handwriting with a standard scale the specimen is usually considered in its gross character, and as a result pupils are stimulated to improve the general quality of their writing without being made conscious of the particular element or elements which should be improved by practice. For this reason it has seemed desirable in the training of teachers at the Harris Teachers College to supplement the use of the handwriting scale with instruction which calls attention specifically to the separate elements and their relative values in good writing.

The work done by one of the writers¹ several years ago in pointing out the defects of handwriting and their respective causes, and the score card of Dr. C. T. Gray², were used in accomplishing the purpose desired. But as neither met fully the requirements of the system of handwriting used in St. Louis, the making of a score card based on the elements of writing recognized in St. Louis and weighted according to the

¹Reavis, W. C., Rational practice in handwriting, *Elementary School Journal*, 15: Sept., 1914, 28-29.

²Gray, C. T., A score card for the measurement of handwriting, (*Bulletin of the University of Texas*, 37: July, 1915.)

emphasis given to the different elements by St. Louis teachers was undertaken.

An analysis of the elements of handwriting described in the St. Louis Handwriting Scale¹ was prepared in outline form with the general factor of neatness added, and was submitted to 300 representative teachers of the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools and Harris Teachers College with the request that they assign values to any or all of the elements in proportion to the relative importance of the elements in good writing—the sum of the values was to total 100 points. Two hundred and fifty replies were returned. The weighted arithmetical mean was then found for the values given to each element, and these were assigned as the respective weights of the different elements.

The following score card was then designed so that deductions might be made according to the kind and degree of errors found in the different elements of a sample of writing. The sum of the deductions subtracted from the perfect score of 100 points gives the score of the sample rated. Space is provided for the scoring of different samples in order that the pupil may observe his improvement in any given element as well as general improvement at five week intervals or at ten week intervals.

The use of the score card in scoring the different elements of a sample of writing, and in diagnosing the difficulties of a pupil is demonstrated by a study of the following specimen of handwriting of an eighth-grade pupil.

The score card allows a weight of 26 points for letter formation. Taking two lines of the sample as representing the achievement of the pupil in writing, and carefully analyzing the same, we find that 18 of the 53 letters or approximately one-third are more or less imperfectly formed. See letters

¹Johnson, G. R., & Stone, C. R., Measuring the quality of handwriting, *Elementary School Journal*, 16: Feb., 1916

HARRIS TEACHERS COLLEGE SCORE CARD

FOR MEASUREMENT OF HANDWRITING

Pupil _____*Grade* _____

Elements of Writing	Perfect Score	Sample No. 1	Sample No. 2	Sample No. 3	Sample No. 4
<i>Formation of letters</i>	26				
Poor form.....					
Parts omitted.....					
Parts added.....					
<i>Slant.....</i>	13				
Too slanting.....					
Too straight.....					
Mixed slant.....					
<i>Quality of line.....</i>	11				
Too heavy.....					
Too light.....					
Not smooth.....					
<i>Spacing of letters.....</i>	11				
Irregular.....					
Too close.....					
Too far apart.....					
<i>Spacing of words.....</i>	10				
Irregular.....					
Too close.....					
Too far apart.....					
<i>Size.....</i>	10				
Not uniform.....					
Too large.....					
Too small.....					
<i>Neatness.....</i>	10				
Blotches.....					
<i>Alignment.....</i>	9				
Poor.....					
<i>Perfect score.....</i>	100				
<i>Total points deducted.....</i>					
<i>PUPIL'S SCORE.....</i>					

STANDARD WRITING RATE OF LETTERS PER MINUTE

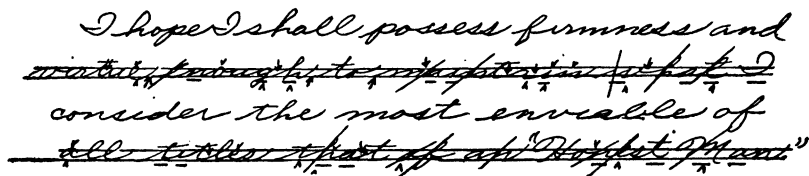
<i>Grade</i>	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<i>Speed</i>	36	48	56	65	72	80	90

Note:—In scoring samples of writing, deduct points in accordance with the degree of errors, find total of points deducted and subtract from 100 to obtain pupil's score.

underlined. The fault does not appear to be one of omitting or adding parts, but rather one of a poor standard of letter forms. Hence a deduction of 33% or 9 points is made on account of poor form.

The slant of 13, or of about one fourth of the 53 letters, is not uniform. The fault is one of variation rather than one of extreme slant or too vertical writing. As this is a matter of control the pupil is penalized in proportion to the degree of his error which is about 25% or 3 points.

SAMPLE NO. I



I hope I shall possess firmness and
~~integrity in my principles~~ I
 consider the most enviable of
~~all titles that of a "Right Man"~~

The quality of line is uniformly smooth throughout, and is neither too heavy nor too light. Consequently no deduction should be made for this element.

In the spacing of letters, 8 out of 40 spacings in the two lines are irregular as indicated by the arrows pointing downward. This justifies a deduction of 20% or 2 points.

Of the 11 spaces between words, 3 show a tendency to overlap, as indicated by the arrows pointing upward. The overlapping of word endings and word beginnings is a serious fault in writing because it interferes with legibility. A penalty of 2 points is given to this element on account of too close spacing.

Approximately one fourth of the 53 letters are not uniform in size as indicated by the check marks placed above the letters. This lack of uniformity receives a deduction of 2 points.

The sample shows no blurs or blotches of any kind that would warrant a deduction on the grounds of neatness.

About one-fourth of the 53 letters are either above or below the line of the paper, as indicated by the check marks placed below the letters. This indicates a lack of control that warrants a penalty of 2 points.

From the foregoing analysis of the elements of a sample of writing and the deductions made from the different elements with respect to their weights, the teacher and pupil have brought to the focus of attention the fact that improvement depends upon a more careful study of letter forms, and consistent practice in overcoming irregularity in slant, size, spacing, and alignment. Furthermore, the general score of 80%, and the good quality of line combined with neatness offer promise of rapid improvement, if effort is rightly spent in practice designed to overcome the specific faults.

There is not sufficient data at present to warrant a generalization regarding the use of the score card in rating handwriting, but the use that has been made of it in St. Louis indicates that it is more accurate than the scale in general scoring, with the added advantage of providing specific suggestions for remedial instruction for those pupils for whom general practice does not produce reasonable and appreciable results.